

# Considering the Purchase of a Medicare Drug Discount Card?

The federal government is warning the public that the Medicare drug discount card may become a way for some criminals to attempt to scam seniors, or to obtain personal or financial information from seniors.

The new discount cards will be available in late April 2004 and can be used starting June 1 to lower the price of certain prescription drugs by 10 to 25 percent.

Medicare beneficiaries can purchase the discount card. Those Medicare beneficiaries who qualify as low income will not need to pay a fee for the discount cards and will receive a \$600 credit on the cards to purchase their prescription medicines in both 2004 and 2005. The cards will be valid until January 1, 2006, when a new prescription drug benefit from the government will be available.

Here is what you need to know to prevent becoming a victim of a scam involving the drug discount cards:

1. The cards will be sold for no more than \$30 per year, and will have no fee for those who have annual incomes below specific levels (\$12,569 for singles or \$16,862 for married couples).
2. Only 28 companies selected by the government can offer the cards. For a list, go to <http://www.medicare.gov> or call 1-800-MEDICARE.
3. The only way to purchase the card will be from information you receive in the mail. There will be NO telephone sales or personal contacts (such as door-to-door sellers). If someone calls you or comes to your door trying to sell you a drug discount card – do not purchase one from this person, and do not give the person any information about you.

The federal government has a website with a lot of information to help you make wise decisions about the prescription drug discount cards. There is also printed information available if you call. Go to: <http://www.medicare.gov> or call 1-800-MEDICARE.